Koren #1 @7314
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RELIGIOUS VS. POLITICAL REASONS FOR JOINING: Similar to the passage above, this again deals with one's primary motivation for becoming a Pagan. For Old Guard Pagans, being political was something that grew out of one's religious ideas. But, just as there is much variance in Old Guard Paganism, so too there is much variance in Old Guard politics. From my own friends, I can cite Old Guard Pagans who run the gamut from Socialist to Libertarian. This same political diversity is noticably absent in New Guard P aganism, with most New Guard Pagans sticking to the same party line. Also, there is less tollerance of Pagans who diverge from that party line. More stress is placed on being 'politically correct'.

RELIGIOUS VS. FEMINIST REASONS FOR JOINING: Finally, many Old Guard Pagans have become feminists AS A RESULT OF their Pagan beliefs. By contrast, many New Guard Pagans are Pagans AS A RESULT OF their feminist beliefs. Once more, it's a question of which t akes precedent. And although it may seem like the final result would be the same, such is not the case. Pagans who come to Paganism via feminism are often separatists, Goddess monotheists, anarchists, distrustful of both structure and authority, insisting on such ideas as consensus political forms, rotating High Priestesses (often without High Priests at all), and other non-traditional Coven structures. (Often, such groups disdain to use the word 'Coven' and simply refer to their 'Circles'.) The perenial problems that plague such groups (the lack of focus, the inability to set goals, the endless personality clashes and power plays, and the fact that nothing ever gets done) come as no surprise. Much of this would be unthinkable to Old Guard Pagans, who wo uld no more rotate the position of High Priestess in their Coven than they would rotate the position of mother in their family. (The New Guard attitude toward authority arises, I believe, from a healthy mistrust of it as it is typically used (abused) in patriarchal society. This perception is particularly acute among feminists. What it fails to consider is how authority may be used positively in a matriarchy.)

NON- VS. PROSELYTIZING: For an Old Guard Pagan, the idea of saying to someone 'Would you like to join our Coven?' or 'Would you like to become a Witch?' would have been unthinkable. Proselytizing was one of the most detested aspects of the religious tradi tion (usually Christian) being left behind. Those groups who actively recruit members were, to the Old Guard, groups to be shunned at all costs. Witchcraft is not the one, right, and only religion. In fact, it probably appeals only to a select few. And th ose few exhibit their courage and sincerity when they seek out a Coven or a

tradition. When a Coven seeks THEM out instead (Won't you please join our Circle tonight?), there is no guage of the novice's devotion. Perhaps that is why the 'drop-out' rate is much higher for New Guard than Old Guard. (Other mystery traditions, such as the Freemasons, strictly forbid a member
to ask an outsider if they would like to join.)

Lest one conclude that there are only differences between Old and New Guard
Pagans, let me mention a few things they seem to have in common. First, there is magic -- both in its frequency of use, and what it is used for. Second, the use of drugs by modern Witches has always been a minority position, and seems to remain so. Third, the times of celebration and festival, appointed by the seasons and the phases of the moon, seem constant
(although New Guard Pagans often employ inappropriate names for the holi days). So, while there are differences, there is common ground as well.

If the remarks you overhear made by Old Guard Pagans (and the remarks made in this essay!) seem slighty petulent, tinged with sibling rivalry, it is not to be wondered at. The Old Guard Pagan is in the position of older brother or sister of the family. Th ey often feel, quite justifiably, that the things which they had to fight Mom and Dad so HARD for, are now being handed to the younger brother or sister on a silver platter. They feel that
since their freedoms and privileges were so hard won, they value t hem more.
They often feel that the younger siblings do not APPRECIATE all the things the older siblings have done to make such freedoms possible. And, of course,
they are right. Such will always be the way of the world -- the march of generations. Still, the thing to remember about sibling rivalry is that, underneath it all, we ARE siblings; we ARE brothers and sisters, whatever forms may divide us; we ARE all sons and daughters of the Great Mother.
re very often
skeptical of new forms. For example, you won't find many Old Guard Pagans going in for the current fad of quart z crystals. In fact, Old Guard Pagans
will likely point out that there have been no controlled experiments concerning the psychic property of crystals, that there is no historical precedent for such beliefs, that the use of crystals by Native Americans ha
s been overstated and misrepresented, and that other precious and semi-precious gem stones are traditionally just as effective. New Guard Pagans, however, are often not far removed from New Age Pagans, and go in for everything from crytals, to channeling, to UFO's, without much hint of critical evaluation.

RELIGIOUS VS. SOCIAL REASON FOR JOINING: This is perhaps the SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE that exists between the two groups, and it could well account for many other differences. For many Old Guard Pagans, there COULD be NO SOCIAL REASON for becoming a Pagan, since Pagans were so few and far between that most of us didn't know ANY other Pagans anywhere! New Guard Pagans, on the other hand, often become involved in Paganism for purely

social reasons. One has the feeling they need the security of being in the SCA, or some other form of surrogate extended family. Not that such a need isn't valid. But if social reasons are the primary motivation for becoming a
Pagan, it marks a significant break from the Old Guard, whose motivation was
chiefly religious. Perhaps that is why Old Guard Pagans are often a bit isolationist, and are quite happy with a fragmented, insular Pagan community. In fact, Old Guard Pagans tend to look with grave suspicion on the 'calls to unity' -- to create a homogenous Pagan communi ty -- that one
often hears coming from New Guard Pagans.